

## **A Dad Again by Nqllisi**

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**Summary:** Hopper makes a phone call to deal with his past before he can move on to build a new family with Eleven.

## A Dad Again

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"Hello?" It was a pleasant male voice answering the call. Chief Hopper cringed slightly.

"Ah, hey Bill. It's, uh, Jim Hopper. Sorry to bother you, man—I just have something to discuss with Diane real quick. Is she around?"

There was a pause. He really couldn't blame Bill for being annoyed. "Yeah, just a minute."

Hop could hear muffled voices.

*It's your ex.*

*What does he want?*

*He didn't say, but he doesn't sound drunk.*

"Hello?" Diane sounded wary. Even after all these years, after everything, he still loved hearing her voice. He sighed softly before he answered.

"Yeah, hey. So, look, sorry to bug you, I just...I mean, I wanted to tell you something before you heard it through the grapevine."

"O-kay?" The wariness deepened into worry.

"Oh, it's nothing bad. I mean...a few months ago there was a case. This kid, she was...she was with a bunch of real monsters, and... anyway, we got her away from them and she didn't have any family who could really take care of her, so...I, well I took her in. I'm going to be adopting her."

"Oh. Oh, Jim."

"Yeah, so, anyway. She's...she's a great kid and she needed somewhere to go, so. And she'll never..." He swallowed hard. "She'll never replace Sarah but it's been good. For both of us. So yeah, I'm a

dad again."

Diane inhaled sharply. "You didn't stop being a dad just because we lost her, Jim." She was clearly crying and trying not to let him know.

"Yeah."

The silence was full of years of history and sadness. Then Hop remembered the other reason he had called.

"But, the other thing is, we didn't really want to dwell on where she came from or what she's been through or really talk about it with anybody. And so some rumors have started...Look, people are talking, and the rumor is going around that she's, like, *actually* my kid, from some woman back in the day or something."

"I see."

"I just—I wanted you to know that I never...I mean, I was happy, and I never would have done that. I never did that."

"I know, Jim."

"Okay. Well, that's why I wanted to call, so."

"Jim? What's her name?"

"Oh. It's Jane. Her name is Jane."

"Jane is a lucky girl who has a great dad now. You take care of each other, okay?"

"Yeah. Thanks Di."

"Bye, Jim."

"Bye."